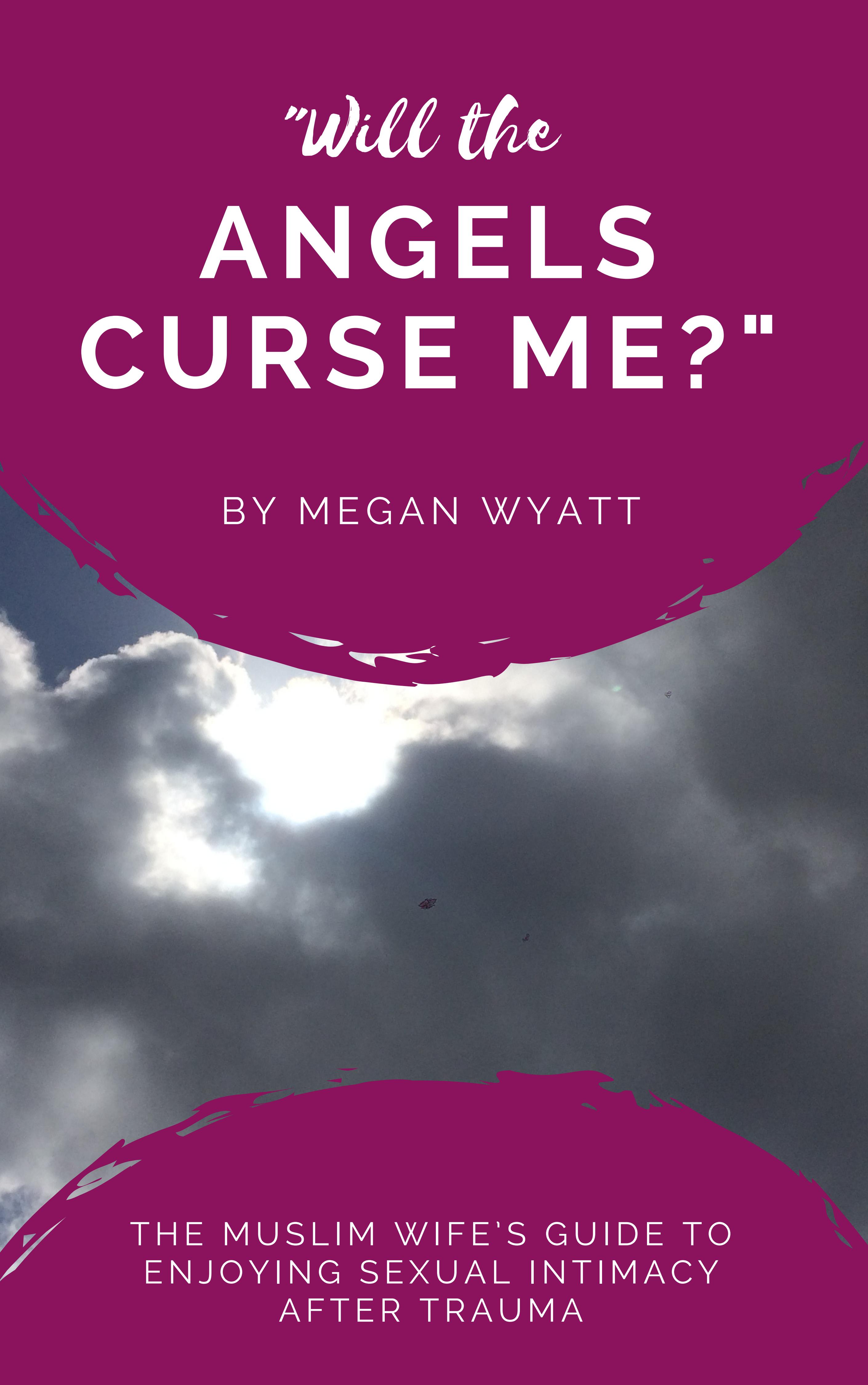


"Will the

ANGELS CURSE ME?"

BY MEGAN WYATT



THE MUSLIM WIFE'S GUIDE TO
ENJOYING SEXUAL INTIMACY
AFTER TRAUMA



In the Name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

"Will the Angels Curse Me?"

The Muslim Wife's Guide to Enjoying Sexual Intimacy After Trauma

By Megan Wyatt,
Founder of Wives of Jannah

*Personal experiences from women quoted in the book are left anonymous and are based on a private survey of wives conducted through Wives of Jannah

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“It’s not that I don’t love my husband, I do, and I want to be a good wife to him. It’s just that I went through something awful long ago that violated me in a way to this day I cannot forget. Every time he approaches me, especially if I didn’t see it coming, I find myself wanting to push him away, run out of the room, and sometimes I even want to scream. I just go numb sometimes when he touches me, I freeze, just allowing him to do what he wants, but the entire time I am waiting for things to be over with, so I get up and go make ghusl. A few times when he touched me I actually ended up having a flashback of the first time something like that happened, and it was against my will. But if I say no, I’m afraid the angels will curse me the entire night.

I can’t tell my husband either, what would he think of me?”

”



If you’ve been through any kind of a traumatic experience in your life, especially one relating to some kind of sexual trauma, the chances are high that you cope with your experience in one of two ways.

The first way is fearing sex, dreading the idea of surrendering your body to the emotional and physical process that sex involves.

The second way is akin to the phrase “If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em.”

You find yourself obsessed with being sexual, sexy, and take pride in being aggressive and not shy to experience or discuss sex. But the truth is that while you have no barriers to performance, rarely is sex a deeply moving and emotional experience, let alone a spiritual one for you.

As a Muslim woman, you are well aware of the importance sex has in marriage, and the list of rights and obligations you are required to fill. Sadly, this list, which is intended to provide guidelines on how to nourish and meet the needs of both the husband and wife, has instead become nothing more than a foundation for fear.

As one wife shared with me the following thought (like the other quotes in this ebook):

“

“I just don’t want to be touched at all. So sick of being harassed for sex without my own sexual needs being met. Muslim men think sex is only for them. We are tools to be used at their disposal and for no other reason or purpose. It’s like being a sex slave to your husband.

It’s HELL on earth.”

”

A person who has never experienced any kind of physical, emotional, or sexual trauma cannot possibly understand why the idea of never being able to say no is so frightening. As one wife reflected:

“

"I read through all the fatawa on a popular Islamic fatwa website, and what I read disgusted me and terrified me. Not only did it make all the men look weak and perverted, it stripped away the woman's right to preferences, making sex to be almost a sport intended only for the man. I was disgusted to see the shaykh answering the questions advising wives to give their husbands whatever they wanted, even if it upset them or totally turned them off personally. As a woman who is struggling to reclaim her sexuality, I want to know I can create healthy boundaries and say "no," if something upsets me. How else can a real loving relationship work? What happened to the notion of tranquility and love in a marriage as described in the Qur'an?"

”

I know that there are indeed people in the world, men and women, who are frightened to challenge such ideas.

They accept that sex is something primarily for men – for their pleasure, entertainment, and, within marriage, to keep their desires “at bay” so they won’t wander into the world and commit haram.

In some cultures, the idea that a woman would *want* to engage in acts of intimacy with her husband for loving and pleasurable reasons has simply vanished. The goal is to have children, and once you have enough, you should simply stop having sex. As simple as that.



Perhaps some men in the world *are* afraid of women becoming educated in the area of intimacy and being given a voice because his bedroom is one of the few places remaining that a man feels he can truly “reign” with power.

Others may fear that an educated woman who respects her body would decide to manipulate her husband instead, thus placing him in a weak position of having to beg her for sex yielding her all of the control in the marriage.

But a loving and conscious marriage is not about power games, dominating another person or controlling another being.

The act of sexual intimacy, one of the highest expressions of love and trust between two people who love each other, needs to stop being discussed within this framework altogether.

Sexual intimacy, when practiced within a loving marriage, should strengthen your love for each other, revive your heart and mind, and leave you feeling full of life, gratitude, and happiness.

A sign that you are deeply connected to your husband is the ability to completely surrender to the moment, to the emotions that envelop you and to find yourself in complete trust of him and complete trust in yourself. You are real, authentic, and fully present.

While this may sound like a fantasy to some women, I assure you that this reality is very possible when you learn how to manage your physical and emotional states, and how to tune in to what is going on in your body.

When you become brave enough to let your husband know who you really are, what has happened in your life, and allow him to be a part of the process of healing that awaits you, you can then experience what it means to be loved for who you are, as a whole person and surrender to the moment without fear.

On the other hand, this may sound like a nightmare.

There is a good reason why your breath becomes shallow when your husband touches you, or you freeze in place.

There are protective reasons you close your eyes and think about something else, or hold your breath until your head starts to hurt, waiting for things to finish.

There is a perfectly good explanation for wanting to fall asleep early, sleep at the edge of the bed, or just casually dive into the whole process, coming and going as if everything is no big deal.

From all of the women I have worked with over the years, those who continue to seek my advice, and through my own personal life experiences, I can tell you that there is a good intention behind every action and thought process you are going through.

You are striving to protect yourself from being hurt, from being violated, from being harmed.

Of course, it's irrational, of course, it doesn't make "logical sense," since your husband, who loves you and wants you to be happy, is the one you married and he isn't trying to hurt you.

"What's wrong with me?" you may ask yourself each time something goes wrong.

“

“I think I create arguments to avoid intimacy at night. I start picking on the little things my husband is doing wrong. Well, I take that back. I think in one way it's because I want to be close to him, but I don't know how to make that happen, and at the same time I am afraid of being close to him, because that might mean him thinking I want to be intimate with him, and he'll start acting differently as a result. It's a mess really. I wish there was a way to make things better more quickly. Sometimes, we have to have an entire fight for things to improve. I feel so bad for my husband. I don't know how to make him understand what is going on.”

”

There is nothing wrong with *you*.

It's time you slow down and truly accept that whatever you have been through has had an impact on you and is now impacting your marriage. It doesn't matter how long ago or how “brief” of an incident it was, or who was involved. It does not matter whether you chose to participate at the time or not. It's not your fault.

Something that is traumatic to our well-being and to the soul can come in many forms, some we choose to participate in, and some we don't choose. Some we interact with and others we freeze up in. Some we fight and others we allow to happen.

All of these responses are attempts to manage a soul-violating and traumatic experience. It is an attempt at survival triggered from an action that caused some of the greatest spiritual and emotional wounds a human being can receive.

This is not the time for judgment; now is an opportunity to practice the gentle art of self-acceptance, of feeling whole regardless of what you think makes you less than whole.

Right now it's time to reconnect with who you are at your essence; and that is a beautiful soul created by Allah.

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said,

“Verily, Allah does not look at your appearance or wealth, but rather he looks at your hearts and actions.”

(Sahih Muslim)

Section 1:

Nourish Your Soul

From an Islamic perspective, before you even begin to tackle your marriage, you have to take this opportunity to turn towards Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala.

Sometimes we turn to Allah only when we are “behaving like a proper Muslim,” such as thanking Him for blessings, making du'a for those struggling with health or under tyranny in other lands.

When it comes to our own personal trials and afflictions, sometimes, we try to hide them, to bury the pain so deep that we don't even tell Allah how we are feeling.

Have you ever done this in your life?

You hear someone is going through some difficulty and your gut reaction is to advise “Turn to Allah, and make du'a for His help and guidance.”

But then you find that they have never even whispered out loud in an empty room while in sujood, “Oh Allah, something ugly, something painful, something so hurtful happened to me and it's still hurting me up until now.”

Whatever the situation is, the safest place to begin the process of healing is to begin with your heart and your Lord.

Tell Him what happened, tell Him how you felt, and ask His help in overcoming the impact.

Articulate your emotions, no matter how strong they are.

One perspective from a Muslim sister was *“Sometimes I feel like screaming. I just want to scream at the top of my lungs, and release this deep inner voice, to scream and push my husband away. I never have, I just hold it in, but the sensation is there. I end up going to another room and silently screaming to Allah that I feel overwhelmed with emotion, and please help me!”*

The sensation may indeed be there, and like all emotions we experience in our life, they are messengers that have come to express a message that words and thought alone cannot adequately articulate.

What would happen if you turned to Allah, and told Him your deepest, darkest secrets?

“Doesn’t He already know them?” you may be wondering.

Indeed, your Lord has full knowledge of everything that happens in the heavens and the earth.

"No doubt! They did fold up their breasts, that they may hide from Him. Surely, even when they cover themselves with their garments, He knows what they conceal and what they reveal. Verily, He is the All-Knower of the (secrets) of the breasts." (Qur'an 11:5)

Nothing escapes Him, and so of course, He knows.

However, you may have not yet experienced what it feels like to present yourself before Allah with your whole being, with your secrets out in the open, speaking to Allah, and emptying the contents of your heart and mind before Him.

To then experience integrating your experience with His knowledge, and turning to the One who is Al-Jabbar, the One Who Repairs, Mends, and Fixes.

This first is a moment to allow you as a person to be whole, before Allah, and in your own heart, to integrate the past and present into a single moment and surrender.

It's time to surrender your pain, your anger, your rage, your anxiety, your sadness, and feelings of insecurity, or low self-esteem.

Here is where you begin the path towards wholeness again.

You are a slave of Allah, His servant, a woman who by His Mercy will enter into Jannah, into palaces, gardens, in the most pure and beautiful place that has ever existed.

You are a Muslimah and you are of those who our Messenger (saw) looks forward to meeting on the Day of Judgment.

You believe in him though you never met him, saw him, or lived in his presence.

You are, before anything else, a soul that has existed longer than your years on earth, and while your body may have experienced trauma, your soul is still within you pure and untainted.

This beautiful soul was created by The Most Merciful, Who sent an angel to breathe into your tiny body long ago when you were in your mother's womb, small and unknown to the world.

Gentle and in peace, your soul joined this worldly domain, but the soul never forgets that it was created to know its Lord.

You existed in a place not bound by time where you testified that Allah is indeed your Lord.

You are so much more than a single moment or series of moments could ever define you as.

A single moment, no matter how painful, ugly, and impure can never contain you, it can neither destroy you nor the noble mission you are on in this world, and that is to care for the creation of Allah until your time comes to pass, worshipping only The One Who created everything.

If you haven't done so before, now is the time to start seeing the beauty in your life and within your own being. While you may never forget a moment or series of moments in time that have brought anguish to your heart, you can live beyond the moments, in happiness, in love, and in safety and trust.

You can learn to trust in Allah and to patiently work through your challenges with your husband, moment by moment, knowing that as time goes by things will get easier.

Let this moment in time be the turning of a new page.



Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, (saw) said,:

"I wish I could meet my brothers." The Prophet's companions said, "Are we not your brothers?" The Prophet said, "You are my companions, but my brothers are those who have faith in me although they never saw me."

Section 2: Understand the Goal of Intimacy

Our world is obsessed with sex, being sexy, and behaving with sexual overtones.

I don't need to paint the picture here because as a woman you already know how things are.

Everything everywhere is about being sexy and desirable and no woman seems to be able to escape the web of ideals and standards being thrown at us.

You might wonder why more women don't simply rebel against such a ridiculous system, but the truth is found in understanding what being sexy gives a woman.

First of all, it's power.

When you feel attractive you are at that moment stronger than a man himself because despite his physical strength, his wealth or powerful position, you know that with the right moves and attention, he becomes weak in your presence, desiring you.

This is a way for women to have power in a man's world.

Women finally get to be in a position of choice, to decide who they let close, and who stays far. They are no longer just waiting to be *chosen*.

It's a game, a power play, and everyone has bought into it because of the "mutual benefits" it brings both men and women whether that's in hooking up or "finding love."

She gets the attention, praise, and initial affection while he gets to stare, fantasize, and feel significant in her expressed interest in him.

All of this culminating in one grand moment of sexual intercourse.

But then what?

As many women in popular magazines, blogs, and articles have said “Is that it? Is this what all the fuss is about?”

Sex is unsatisfying and impersonal and much to the surprise of many women - extremely emotional and unsettling especially when the person they had sex with moves on to someone else.

On the other hand women believe they can't rebel.

They have to conform to the standards of popular culture or fear tells them they'll never be loved. They'll never get chosen. No man will commit to them or want them.

Once involved in a relationship she is encouraged to mimic sexual content online in order to fulfill the man's fantasy or to assure herself that she is as desirable as *those women* out there.

In essence, she is taught on a subliminal level, that a woman's connection to love is as strong as her willingness to satisfy a man's sexual desires.

But the goal of sex isn't just about men and yet even within our Muslim circles we continue to speak about it as if it was.



Muslim women experiencing sexual intercourse for the first time after their wedding are often disappointed. The experience may have been uncomfortable, forced, brief, and incredibly unsatisfying.

For a woman who has experienced an act of trauma in her past, specifically sexual trauma, the experience may leave her with emotions of sadness, emptiness, and at times, disgust.

All on the first night or few nights of marriage, this experience is overwhelming and can make the days to come strained amidst the happiness of being married.

Sexual intercourse is meant to be the height of love expressed between two adults in a committed, loving marriage.

It is an act of worship in Islam, not just because it is the opposite of haram, but because it is one of the mature pleasures granted to human beings by Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, to increase the loving bond between a man and a woman in a state of enjoyment and willing submission of the body to one another.

Sex then moves beyond the realm of a simple biological physical action to one of actual intimacy, emotional closeness, and connection with one's heart and iman when the overarching goal is focused on connection and closeness.

It doesn't mean that every physical exchange between spouses is akin to some deeply romantic or super passionate moment.

It does mean, however, that even with flirtation, playfulness, and brief sexual acts, both the husband and the wife experience a sense of emotional connection in their relationship.

Dealing with previous trauma or not, no one wants to feel that they are simply the "dumping ground" of their spouse's sexual energy. While our culture at large in many ways continues to affirm the notion that sex is for men, and a way to control their desires is to have a woman to "drain himself into", I hold the belief that this is a very immature understanding of sex and a limiting practice and belief.

Most women are familiar with the common stereotype that sex is a "physical" thing for men but an "emotional" experience for women.

That when a man has satisfied himself, he is ready to move on with the day, while a woman, (shown as a sign of her emotional weakness), wants to be held, cuddled, and given emotional attention.

This belief alone shows the shallowness that men are taught in a "boy's world" about sex which demonstrates that it's just a "physical thing" which has no emotional impact on a boy or a man. Except sex is emotional for everyone - we just handle emotions differently as individuals.

Sex is meant to be *meaningful* for men and women in an *emotional and spiritual* way, as well as physically satisfying for *both* husband and wife.

In order for you to enjoy physical affection with your husband and to create space for a deeply connected intimate experience, you must first consciously explore your beliefs surrounding sex. (Ideally you both explore those together!)

This is especially a priority if previous traumas are impacting your sex life in the present in any way shape or form.

What does sex mean to you?

What expectations do you have?

What about sex do you enjoy?

What about sex are you afraid of?

How often do you feel loved during the love making process?

Are you fully present in your body or do you check out?

Do you allow things to continue even when something doesn't feel right emotionally or physically?

Do you express your desires to your husband?

Have you ever felt like you are performing like an actress rather than being yourself?

These are some good questions to explore and examine in your own time.

This doesn't need to be an overnight process, but a journey of healing, acceptance, growth, and in the future, inspiration insha'Allah.

Your marriage, with a loving and considerate husband, is the safest and best place for you to explore your feelings and beliefs, and it should be a safe haven to try out something new and monitor how things go.

Maybe right now you prefer not to be touched by your husband in certain places on your body, but in time, you will be able to explore that together.

You can then slowly work through your emotions and feelings until you arrive at a place free from your past and the associations developed then.

Most importantly, I want you to make a decision on what you want sexual intimacy to be about. Why am I asking this?

In order to be healthy and balanced in your marriage, in order to take care of yourself and make sure that what you are doing is loving and safe for you, you have to know what you want sex to be and not to be so you know when to stop and say to your husband, "*This doesn't feel loving to me right now.*"

You must be your own advocate for love and happiness because unless your man is highly trained in the art of intuitiveness and is used to recognizing your subtle physical movements that express your emotions, he is not going to know when to stop or what to do.

Your husband may initially take offense to you saying something like this because he will think he is doing something wrong.

This is not just your journey anymore; it becomes a couple's journey together.

But at this stage, it's important for you to learn how to create boundaries for yourself, to do what you couldn't do in the past, which is stop something you do not enjoy or stop allowing yourself to be used by someone without any care or concern for how it makes you feel.

Yes, your husband has rights to being sexually intimate with you, but that doesn't translate into becoming a doormat.

You are not just "halal sex," and any loving husband who looks to the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (saw) as an example would know better than that.

His role is to honor you, to protect you, and most importantly see to it that your environment is conducive to your emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being.

At times, he too will have to sacrifice what he wants for what is best.

This is what we call MANHOOD.

In return, as a wife, your role is to respect him, to be loyal, honest and fair, and to equally strive to grant him that which makes him happy.

To be truly fair to him means to focus on healing, and to go through the effort of freeing yourself from the painful past so that you both can experience the height of love and respect during the sexual act.

It isn't going to be easy all the time, but insha'Allah, it will get easier as time passes, for both of you.

Just as you deserve a safe place to explore and enjoy sexual intimacy - so does he.

He has looked forward to sharing his desires with a woman his whole life. You are she. Honor that and appreciate how much it means to him.

Section 3:

Accepting Your Triggers

Depending on your experiences and how you have processed them, the decisions you subconsciously made about what happened to you (*I am used, I am not pure, I am innocent but afraid of men now...*) can impact your intimate marital relationship in a way that is unique to you.

So can certain environments, sounds, smells, or sensations.

An important first step is to raise your personal level of awareness of what you experience in your body when your past is triggered.

It doesn't need to "make sense" or "be rational".

You just have to accept what happens, and when you begin to pay attention, you may notice patterns.

Once you notice patterns, you are able to communicate much more clearly to yourself, and then to your husband, what is going on.

You may start to notice small, subtle triggers that you weren't aware of before.

For example, listening to your husband's footsteps coming towards the bedroom may cause you to feel anxiety.

When he goes to hold you in bed, perhaps you find you that your pulse quickens and you feel like pulling away.

Some women have reported that everything was going really well and then suddenly in the middle of sexual intercourse, they feel sick, or they develop a strong headache.

So let's talk about how to work through triggered moments.

Section 4:

Working Through Your Triggers With Your Husband

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“I let my husband know when something is going on. Because I tend to push him physically away, it’s important for me to be able to communicate to him that what is going on is about me, and not about him, and I need some time to work through the current trigger. This way he knows something has happened and we can talk about it, and usually, once I’ve done that, or within a short amount of time, I am able to physically open up to him again.”

”

Imagine you are lying in bed, and your husband is nearby, and he reaches over to pull you close.

You get the sense that he wants to be physically intimate with you, but instead of being happy that he is paying attention to you, and that this is an opportunity for you both to experience closeness, you feel like pulling away.

As you lie cold and lifeless, he picks up on your vibe and pulls away feeling rejected and frustrated.

Yet again, he isn’t able to connect emotionally and physically with you.

You hear him sigh, and start to roll over in bed, mumbling “Goodnight,” as you continue to lie still, hoping to feign exhaustion.

You know full well that you miss your husband, but all of a sudden you are completely turned off by him.

Your mind starts racing with fears of Allah being displeased with you, and you reach for his hand and snuggle up to him.

“I’m sorry....I’m just not in the mood again. I feel tired. “Tomorrow ?” you say, trying to lift the tone of your voice at the end to sound positive.

He doesn't respond and instead forces himself to fall asleep, pretending not to hear your voice.

It's been over a month and a half since you two have been close, and it looks like another week is about to go by.

You lay there asking yourself, "Will the angels curse me now? Am I a terrible wife and a terrible Muslim? Is Allah going to punish me?"

What else could you do?

At a moment like this, there is another option, and it's not to just "perform" to make him satisfied because, as I mentioned in the beginning, physical contact isn't the sole goal of intimacy, only a part of it.

If you force your body to do something you aren't emotionally or physically ready to do, especially while triggered due to a previous trauma, you could risk reinforcing the feelings from that trauma and begin to associate them with your husband.

I have no doubt that our Lord is infinitely more compassionate, loving, and gentle than any human being on this planet. If human beings that work with people who have overcome trauma can understand this then surely our Lord does too.

But there is a responsibility on your end as well.

At such a vulnerable moment, it is imperative that you speak to your husband and let him know exactly what is going on inside of you both physically and emotionally.

It is his right to be sexually intimate with you, as it is your right from him, therefore being dishonest is not acceptable.

It may not seem like dishonesty because truthfully you are not "in the mood" to be close with him, but you are not telling the whole truth, and certainly not honoring your husband or your marriage by not communicating.

The goal of communication is to open up the *possibility* of being with him, for your sake and his.

Both of you need physical touch and both of you need to experience this kind of expression of love.

Your job, again, is to create the possibility. Rather than close the door, leave it open and see what has to happen so you can go through it.

This is where my principle of Fearless Vulnerability comes in, and here I would like to simply introduce you to what this means.

Fearless Vulnerability:

Creating opportunities to give and receive deep and meaningful love by practicing the art of raw honesty and emotional and physical vulnerability in a safe and respectful relationship, despite deep-seated fears which would otherwise hold you back.

Depth, passion, strength, and change all happen from beyond those fears.

Your marriage, or rather, your whole *life*, is asking you to move beyond these frozen invisible walls in your heart, and the opportunity is ready when you are.

But it starts with this graceful art of vulnerability.

If you have never spoken to your husband before about your past, now would be the time. You can't have a huge elephant in the room and never discuss what "it" is.

Your husband will be forced to wonder on his own about what could possibly be wrong. He may not share his thoughts and feelings with you, but I can tell you that men do not take rejection well, especially from their wife.

You are rejecting him, even if it's not intentionally. He feels your rejection of his desire to be close to you, to allow him to express his love or attraction to you, and since this is his own level of vulnerability, it hurts to be rejected from such a place.

You may be wondering what exactly you should tell him. Honestly, I believe that is up to you. If there is no sins from your past at all because the trauma you experienced wasn't your fault and you were a victim there is no reason to hesitate in discussing what you went through.

If the trauma is somehow connected to something you did consciously choose in your past, (but it still led to a traumatic experience) it can still be healthy to do share this with your spouse.

You do not need to give specific details if you aren't comfortable doing so, therefore, some expression of a life-altering and terrible event may be sufficient.

If you aren't ready to speak to your husband yet, please consider speaking to someone. If your past is having a severe impact on your quality of life and marriage I highly recommend working with a mental health professional.

I personally believe, and have experienced, that secrets that allow us to harbor shame and humiliation need to be expressed in order to be released from the power such memories have over us.

Not everyone who has been through something difficult harbors such shame, and as a result, they are often quick to judge the recommendations given to others to speak to someone. Or it may be that they themselves are too afraid to face their own past and the idea of opening up to someone would stir up buried feelings of humiliation, anger, and shame.

Either way, you are the only one living in your own body. Determine what you need for yourself and the health and well-being of your marriage.

Pray Salatul Istikhrah once you have determined what you think is best, asking Allah for help and guidance, for He is the source of all healing, peace, and comfort.

It becomes much easier to express to your husband, once he has knowledge of how you are feeling when he approaches you, that something was triggered and you need to take time to slow down and feel through that moment.

He will have the ability to be more patient, insha'Allah, because he knows it's not his fault, and it's not about him, so he can focus on supporting you rather than defending himself from being rejected and hurt.

It can be really helpful to buy books that discuss some of the things you have faced, firstly, for your own self to find validation and understanding, but also for your husband to read so that he can get a better understanding of what happens and that it is normal for you.

Knowledge is truly empowering in areas like this because it removes the feeling "there is something wrong with me and only me," to "I am completely normal for feeling this way considering what I've been through."

Empower yourself with any and every resource you can find.

Seeking knowledge and working towards healing also removes the feeling that you are perpetually a victim of your circumstances.

While it is true you have been a victim, it is no longer true that you still are a victim, unless you are currently tolerating behaviors in your life that you should not be allowing.

Your past is always going to be a part of who you are, but you need not feel imprisoned by it.

Your past doesn't get to define who you must be in the present. You get to do that.

People are tested every day in their marriages and issues regarding intimacy, so in many ways you are like everyone else.

If it wasn't this test, there would be another.

It may seem odd to find comfort in the fact that we as humans are always being tested, but it removes the idea and notion that only you and your husband have "issues," and everyone else is carefree all the time.

We adjust our lives according to the tests in front of us and accept that this is what we must go through, submitting our hearts to Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, and trusting that He wants what is best for us.

And knowing that what you bring to the marriage is a test that your husband was meant to go through with you. There is something for him to learn through you and your experiences.

Pain is wonderful teacher if we allow it to open us. When we love someone else, we stretch our hearts to encompass their pain and seek to be the one who diminishes it.

Your past and your pain becomes his invitation to transform into a more compassionate and wiser man. And it invites you to become more vulnerable and thus stronger and resilient.

وَلَنَبْلُونَكُم بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ
وَالثَّمَرَاتِ  وَبَشِّرُ الصَّابِرِينَ

Section 5: You Are Not Cursed

When people quote the following hadith I hope they will do so while understanding the great responsibility that comes with narrating it. For too long women have been terrified of this narration believing that they didn't have any rights to honor their feelings and experiences.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said:

“The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘If a man calls his wife to his bed and she refuses [and does not come], and he spends the night angry with her, the angels will curse her until morning.’”

(Reported by al-Bukhaari, 4794; the additional phrase quoted in square brackets is from Abu Dawood, al-Sunan, Kitaab al-Nikaah, Bab haqq al-zawj ‘ala’l-mar’ah).

Islam is a mercy sent to us by our Lord and Prophet Muhammad (saw) was sent as a mercy to mankind.

To suggest that harming a woman in any way in her most vulnerable and intimate experience is acceptable from a man would go against human decency let alone the Islamic standards of mercy and kindness.

A man is, after all, the shephard in charge of his family and is responsible for the physical, emotional, and spiritual well being of his family including his wife.

If anything this hadith is highlighting for us something specific.

It isn't the woman saying no that is the concern of the hadith. It's the fact that her husband was angry with her.

Here we have a man who is so angry, actually livid with his wife, to the extent that he falls asleep in anger or can't sleep all night because of his anger.

This paints a picture of one of two scenarios:

1) A woman who doesn't honor her husband, his needs, or respect his desires for intimacy at all to the extent she will leave him simmering in anger and not care about his feelings at all.

2) A man who has no patience or tolerance for his wife's well being and gets angry at her without reason or fairness.

In scenario one we can understand the severity of the situation.

If he has been vulnerable with his wife about desiring to be intimate and she has rejected him at this level and hurt him and disrespected him without any care about his feelings we understand that she is sinning and disrespecting her husband and entire marriage.

I personally have heard from men who have wives that outright reject them, and even make fun of them for their desires, leaving them incredibly hurt.

A man's vulnerability deserves to be respected as well as appreciating that in his fear of Allah he chooses to satisfy his own desires through the wife which is halal to him instead of going outside the boundaries of marriage in any way. Beyond that, he loves her and desires to be close to her.

Sex is not meant to be used as a means of controlling one's spouse or punishing them by withholding it. If Allah chooses, He can decide that such a wife is guilty of a sin and determine the consequence for that until and unless she repents and repairs her relationship.

If it's scenario number two a woman has to trust that Allah is Just, Gentle, and Loving and would never be unjust to her.

If she genuinely wasn't able to be intimate with her husband, and did her best to explain why, and he still got so angry that he went to bed furious it's because he didn't do his part to take care of his wife and help her open up or choose a timing that was fair to her. He has thought of only himself and has failed to listen to her feelings and needs so that he can create a win-win situation for both of them in some way.

We have to stop threatening women with this hadith and letting men so easily off the hook. Marriage is about both people being responsible, not just one.

My experience as a relationship coach has shown me that men like this are often emotionally volatile and emotionally abusive to their wives.

Sex, for such men, is not about emotional and physical intimacy but only about satisfying a physical desire with little regard, if any, to their wife's experience.

In such situations it is obvious to anyone with any ounce of compassion or human decency that he is responsible for harming her or forcing her into a situation where, out of her fear of Allah's anger, she puts herself through a physical and emotional experience which is detrimental to her well-being.

If this is the case, I encourage such a wife to seek professional help so that she is not consistently being traumatized in the very place where she is meant to find love, pleasure, and safety.

Just because culture teaches that men, stereotypically speaking, need sex more often that does *not* justify their right to hurt their wife or be inconsiderate of her.

Any woman who has been traumatized in some way can easily create a backstory to understand why a wife would say no to sex even though her husband is extremely mad at her. She can find excuses for her and wants to advocate for her because, in the common context of abusing the aforementioned hadith, it seems that the woman has no safe space to turn to.

Not even to Allah.

And this is the part that can create the deepest spiritual wound - when a woman feels that not even her Lord is a place of refuge.

How unfortunate to be in that level of spiritual pain to think that not only do you have to give into an angry husband who is traumatizing you now but that Allah is always on his side.

Islam is not black and white. Our conversations about statements like this need to be nuanced and respect human experience and human emotion.

Men need to stop scaring women out of fear they'll be denied their rights to sex. They need to start investing more in the beautiful women in their life and learn how to develop a relationship that is modeled after Prophet Muhammad (saw) and his care, love, and sensitivity not just for his wives but everyone.

There is no excuse for any wife to ever be living in terror in her marriage or to have to relive traumatic feelings ever again.

Ihsan should call all of us to do much better than this. Most importantly, in holding both a husband and a wife to account, we need to remember what the goal of marriage in Islam is.

Let us recall the verse which summarizes our goals:

وَمِنْ أَيَّتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا
وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَنْفَكِرُونَ



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And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.



Insha'Allah, by taking a step towards understanding what is happening within you, whether during times of physical intimacy or beyond, you are beginning a new journey of self-awareness and spiritual development.

Your iman and the strength of it require you to face yourself, your deepest and darkest secrets, and seek your Lord, His mercy, and guidance to find healing.

Your marriage requires nothing less as well; it is an opportunity to help you heal, grow, and mature beyond the past into a more loving future with your husband.

Do not overwhelm yourself with the belief that you have to “fix” yourself overnight, and that everything should be perfect within a month.

Quite possibly, this could take years or a lifetime to accomplish.

You may always have moments where it is difficult for you to open up with your husband, but with time and practice, I can promise you that, by the will and mercy of Allah, it will be easier to overcome and happen less frequently, and some issues will simply fade into the distance altogether.

Your journey of fearless vulnerability begins here, and so do the endless possibilities for a deeply connected and sexually fulfilling marriage.

And an invitation to know and trust in Allah and come closer to Him like never before.

He is always The Most Loving, The Most Forgiving, The Most Gentle, The Most Beautiful, The Most Merciful, and The One Who Repairs.

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